

For Immediate Release November 9, 2015  
Contact: Bill Zaferos, Public Information Manager  
414/278-4230 or [William.zaferos@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:William.zaferos@milwaukeecountywi.gov)

**MILWAUKEE COUNTY BOARD PASSES RESPONSIBLE BUDGET**  
**More Money for Public Safety, Less Borrowing, and a Balanced Budget**

Today the Milwaukee County Board approved a \$1.37 billion budget for 2016. By a margin of 14-3, the Board passed the budget which makes significant improvements to the plan offered by County Executive Chris Abele. As a result of the Board's month-long work and numerous public meetings, the adopted budget is more fiscally sustainable.

"The Board's balanced budget includes a tax levy below the state limit, borrows less and uses less reserves than the Executive proposed and also better represents the needs of Milwaukee County's diverse communities," Board Chairman Theodore Lipscomb, Sr. said.

"We made the adult budget decisions that the County Executive refused to make," said Lipscomb "The County Board was forced to restore the County Executive's reckless cuts to public safety and to reduce his imprudent use of reserves to balance the budget."

"Abele's commitment of \$80 million from Milwaukee County to the Buck's arena had a ripple effect in the 2016 budget which he tried to hide through cuts to the Sheriff's Office. But his deception was exposed during the budget process, and the Board accounted honestly by restoring \$4 million in tax levy funding for public safety."

All of the net tax levy increase (1.4 percent) results from the restoration of public safety funding that the County Executive cut with no guidance on how to achieve the reductions or evidence that the massive abatement to the Office of the Sheriff could be implemented safely.

"The County Executive relied on increased use of reserve and stabilization funds to cover up higher pension contributions that resulted from a roughly \$20 million pension error that took place under his watch," Lipscomb said. "The Board cut the dependence on those funds with an investment of \$6 million in order to be more responsible." The draw from the POB Stabilization Fund was cut in half; overall the reliance on reserves was trimmed by 35 percent.

Other significant budget investments include funding for the Office of African American Affairs, Municipal ID in partnership with the City of Milwaukee, improvements in parks across the County, expanded transit routes to better connect workers to suburban jobs, and restoration of funding for homeless shelters.

The Executive believes an expenditure reduction is good budget strategy for the Sheriff, so the Board calls upon him and other constitutional officers to use it with their departmental budgets. An expenditure reduction of 1% is a fraction of the 12 percent lump sum reduction recommended by the Executive for the Office of the Sheriff. The Adopted Budget reasonably provides safeguards if a department cannot achieve a 1% reduction.

The 2016 County Budget now goes back to the County Executive for his approval or partial veto. The County Board will review and act on any vetoes at its next scheduled meeting, November 18.

###

